

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

KKM perluas penempatan pegawai perubatan siswazah

747 pelatih ditempatkan ke semua negeri kurangkan beban petugas kesihatan

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Kuala Lumpur: Seramai 747 pegawai perubatan yang menamatkan latihan siswazah masing-masing akan ditempatkan ke semua negeri bagi menampung kekurangan pegawai perubatan sedia ada.

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) berkata, selain membantu meredakan peningkatan beban kerja petugas kesihatan, penempatan pegawai perubatan siswazah itu juga untuk tujuan latihan supaya mereka mendapat pendedahan dan latihan klinikal yang mencukupi.

"Ini penting supaya mereka mampu memberi perkhidmatan yang berkualiti serta dapat mengamalkan dengan selamat.

"KKM turut mengarahkan semua pengarah hospital untuk memastikan kebajikan semua petugas kesihatan terpelihara walaupun tahap pengisian pegawai perubatan siswazah di hospital masih dalam proses penambahbaikan," katanya melalui kenyataan semalam.

Dalam pada itu, KKM memaklumkan pihaknya amat mema-



Pengisian pegawai perubatan siswazah di hospital seluruh negara tampung kekurangan pegawai perubatan sedia ada. (Foto hiasan)

hami cabaran dihadapi petugas kesihatan di seluruh negara dalam menghadapi peningkatan bebanan kerja.

Justeru, beberapa langkah jangka pendek dan jangka panjang akan dilaksanakan bagi mengatasi masalah berkenaan.

KKM sebelum ini memutuskan untuk membuka penempatan pegawai perubatan siswazah baharu bagi lantikan siri ketiga ke beberapa lagi hospital lain selain hospital negeri.

Keputusan dibuat memandangkan peratus pengisian slot pegawai perubatan siswazah bertambah baik dengan tawaran penempatan dilaksanakan menerusi sistem e-houseman pada 13 Mei lalu yang memabitkan 792 calon.

Awal tahun ini, KKM memutuskan penempatan dibuka kepada hospital negeri saja disebabkan pelantikan PPS semakin menurun dan pengisian slot pegawai perubatan siswazah di hospital negeri juga berkurangan.

Dua siri lantikan baharu

Sehingga April 2024, KKM melaksanakan dua siri lantikan baharu pegawai perubatan siswazah memabitkan 701 orang pada siri lantikan pertama dan 803 lagi pada siri lantikan kedua.

Bagi siri lantikan seterusnya, KKM berkata penempatan pegawai perubatan siswazah di hospital lain akan dipertimbang dari semasa ke semasa berdasarkan bilangan calon yang diterima daripada Suruhanjaya Perkhidma-

tan Awam (SPA) serta faktor lain.

Sebelum ini Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad mengarahkan pengurusan KKM meneliti isu bebanan tugas di hospital dan meminta penilaian semula tindakan yang telah dibuat memabitkan penempatan dan cara kerja pegawai perubatan siswazah.

Menurut Dr Dzulkefly, negara pernah melalui fasa lambakan graduan perubatan yang mencecah 6,000 hingga 7,000 setahun.

"Kini jumlah graduan kurang 3,000 setahun menyebabkan jumlah pegawai perubatan siswazah di hospital semakin berkurang. Oleh itu, mereka berasa terbeban dengan bebanan kerja dan kekurangan anggota," katanya.

Johor masih guna pakai SOP urus kes jangkitan COVID-19

Johor Bahru: Kerajaan negeri mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga berikutan peningkatan baharu kes penularan COVID-19 di Singapura.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan dan Perpaduan Johor, Ling Tian Soon, berkata prosedur operasi standard (SOP) pengurusan kes COVID-19 dari Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) masih diguna pakai.

Tiada SOP baharu

Katanya setakat ini tiada keperluan untuk pihaknya meminta SOP baharu, memandangkan peningkatan kes COVID-19 di negeri ini tidak ketara.

"Menurut data yang saya peroleh pada minggu epid 18 terdapat 95 kes COVID-19, diikuti (138 kes) pada minggu epid 19 dan (154 kes) pada minggu epid 20. Ini menunjukkan peningkatan, tetapi tidak ketara sehingga kini.

"Walaupun Singapura sudah keluar penyataan baru mengenai lonjakan kes COVID-19, bagi warga Malaysia khususnya bangsa Johor perlu berjaga-jaga, khususnya bagi mereka yang berisiko tinggi seperti warga emas atau sakit kronik.

"Jika hendak pergi ke tempat berisiko, pakai pelitup muka. Kita masih amalkan SOP yang sama.

"Kalau ada keperluan contoh selesema, batuk dan demam digalakkan pakai pelitup muka dan tidak ke tempat tertutup dan ramai orang," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : MINDA PEMBACA

Tingkat kesedaran isu kesihatan mental mahasiswa elak lebih serius

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Isu masalah kesihatan mental dalam kalangan anak muda, terutama mahasiswa sering menjadi perkara yang membimbangkan masyarakat dan negara. Sekiranya isu ini tidak diberikan perhatian, ia mungkin akan menjadi kompleks dan sulit ditangani bahkan berpotensi mengancam nyawa dengan perilaku berbahaya seperti cubaan membunuh diri selain bertindak di luar kawalan.

Sebelum ini *BH* pernah melaporkan bahawa isu sebegitu boleh mempengaruhi tingkah laku bunuh diri misalnya, ia membabitkan kes sehingga 1,142 pada 2021 berbanding 631 setahun sebelumnya.

Lazimnya, masalah kesihatan mental mahasiswa ini sering dikaitkan dengan beberapa faktor yang dapat mempengaruhi kesejahteraan mereka. Antara punca yang sering dikaitkan, termasuk tekanan akademik, masalah keluarga, isu sosial, kewangan, transisi hidup dan sebagainya.

Jika di kampus, ia membabitkan isu seperti tuntutan akademik yang tinggi seperti jadual kelas padat, bebanan tugas serta tidak pandai mengurus masa belajar. Semua isu itu menyebabkan tekanan kepada mahasiswa hingga mungkin menimbulkan rasa putus asa, buntu dan kehilangan motivasi untuk belajar.

Mahasiswa yang tidak memiliki jadual belajar teratur, cenderung berasa tertekan untuk menyelesaikan tugas kerana sukar membezakan antara perkara keutamaan dan keperluan hidup. Impaknya mereka akan berasa cemas dan kebingungan dalam menentukan tindakan yang harus dilakukan.

Bukan itu sahaja, masalah kewangan seperti biaya kuliah yang tinggi mendorong mahasiswa untuk mencari pekerjaan sambil untuk membantu memenuhi keperluan kewangan mereka. Jika masa

tidak diuruskan dengan baik, maka ia akan mengganggu tumpuan dan keseimbangan di antara akademik dan pekerjaan.

Semua pihak perlu berperanan

Persoalannya di sini, wajarkah kita hanya berdiam diri melihat masalah kesihatan mental mahasiswa ini? Tentu sahaja tidak. Jadi, semua pihak perlu berganding bahu memberikan dukungan dan sumber daya yang diperlukan untuk membantu mereka mengatasi masalah kesihatan mental.

Sebagai contoh, kaunselor berperanan menjadi pendengar simpati dan memahami tekanan yang dialami oleh mahasiswa tanpa terus menghakimi atau menilai perasaan mereka. Teknik ini membantu dalam membina hubungan kerja yang positif dengan mahasiswa.

“Kesihatan mental yang baik dapat mempengaruhi seluruh aspek kehidupan mahasiswa, termasuk prestasi akademik, hubungan sosial, kesejahteraan fizikal dan mental”

Selain itu, sistem *buddies* atau 'sahabat' boleh dijadikan inisiatif berkesan dalam menyelesaikan masalah kesihatan mental. Ini disebabkan mahasiswa boleh memberikan dukungan emosional dan membangunkan rasa kebersamaan antara satu sama lain.

Kaedah ini menyebabkan mereka tidak berasa sendirian dalam perjuangan menangani isu ini, sebaliknya dapat meluahkan perasaan dengan teman sebaya yang mungkin mengalami masalah sama.

Kesihatan mental yang baik dapat mempengaruhi seluruh aspek kehidupan mahasiswa, termasuk prestasi akademik, hubungan sosial, kesejahteraan fizikal dan mental. Mahasiswa sudah tentu berasa bertambah bahagia, tenang dan mampu menjalani kehidupan dengan lebih baik jika emosinya stabil.

Kondisi kesihatan mental yang buruk akan menjejaskan kesihatan mahasiswa seperti gangguan pemakanan contohnya anoreksia, bulimia atau gangguan makan berlebihan disebabkan tekanan melampau. Malah, ia juga mengganggu pola tidur mahasiswa seperti menyebabkan insomnia atau tidur berlebihan.

Menerusi amalan pendekatan proaktif dalam merawat kesihatan mental, individu dapat mengambil langkah untuk menjaga keseimbangan emosional dan kesejahteraan mereka sehari-hari, sekali gus dapat mengurangkan risiko terjadinya masalah yang lebih serius pada masa hadapan.

Oleh itu, sebagai masyarakat yang cakna kita perlu segera mengambil inisiatif awal dan beragam dalam meningkatkan kesedaran mengenai isu kesihatan mental mahasiswa sebelum ia menjadi lebih serius kerana 'sesal dahulu pendapatan, sesal kemudian tiada guna.'

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : LOKAL

KES COVID-19 DI SINGAPURA

Kerajaan negeri Johor berjaga-jaga

Johor Bahru: Kerajaan negeri mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga berikutan peningkatan baharu kes Covid-19 di negara jiran Singapura.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan dan Perpaduan Johor, Ling Tian Soon berkata, Prosedur Operasi Standard (SOP) pengurusan kes Covid-19 dari Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) masih digunakan.

Katanya, setakat ini tiada keperluan untuk pi-

haknya meminta SOP baharu, memandangkan peningkatan kes Covid-19 di negeri ini tidak ketara.

"Menurut data diperoleh pada minggu epid 18 terdapat 95 kes Covid-19, diikuti (138 kes) pada minggu epid 19 dan (154 kes) pada minggu epid 20. Ia menunjukkan peningkatan tetapi tidak ketara," katanya ketika ditemui selepas Sambutan Hari Wesak di Tokong Fo Guang Shan di Taman Uda Utama di sini, semalam.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : LOKAL

KKM buka penempatan PPS

Tawaran dilaksanakan menerusi sistem e-houseman pada 13 Mei lalu babitkan 792 calon

Bernama

Putrajaya

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) membuka penempatan pegawai perubatan siswazah (PPS) baharu bagi lantikan siri ketiga ke beberapa lagi hospital selain daripada hospital negeri.

KKM pada kenyataan semalam, memaklumkan keputusan membuka penempatan PPS dibuat meman-

dangkan peratus pengisian slot berkenaan bertambah baik.

"Tawaran penempatan ini dilaksanakan menerusi sistem e-houseman pada 13 Mei lalu membabitkan 792 calon," menurut kenyataan itu.

Pada awal tahun ini, KKM memutuskan supaya penempatan dibuka kepada hospital negeri sahaja disebabkan pelantikan PPS didapati semakin rendah dan pengisian slot PPS di hospital negeri juga ber-

kurangan.

Sehingga April ini, KKM sudah melaksanakan dua siri lantikan baharu PPS membabitkan 701 orang pada siri lantikan pertama dan 803 orang pada siri lantikan kedua.

"Bagi siri lantikan seterusnya, penempatan PPS di hospital-hospital lain akan dipertim-

bangkan dari semasa ke semasa berdasarkan bilangan calon diterima daripada Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam serta faktor-faktor lain yang berkaitan," menurut kenyataan itu.

KKM memaklumkan, pihaknya memahami cabaran dihadapi oleh petugas kesihatan di seluruh negara dalam

menghadapi peningkatan bebanan kerja dan beberapa langkah akan dilaksanakan bagi mengatasi masalah berkenaan.

Pada Mei, KKM memaklumkan, 747 pegawai perubatan yang sudah menamatkan latihan siswazah ditempatkan ke semua negeri bagi menampung kekurangan pegawai perubatan sedia ada.

"Tujuan latihan yang diberikan kepada PPS sewaktu penempatan adalah

supaya mereka mendapat pendedahan dan latihan klinikal yang mencukupi.

"Ini penting supaya mereka mampu memberi perkhidmatan berkualiti serta dapat mengamal dengan selamat," menurut KKM.

KKM turut mengarahkan semua pengarah hospital untuk memastikan kebajikan petugas kesihatan terpelihara walaupun tahap pengisian PPS di hospital-hospital masih dalam proses penambahbaikan.

KKM memutuskan supaya penempatan dibuka kepada hospital negeri sahaja

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NEGARA



KEKURANGAN doktor pada masa ini dapat diatasi selepas 747 pegawai perubatan siswazah mula ditempatkan di semua negeri bermula bulan ini. - GAMBAR HIASAN

Penempatan baharu dedah kepada latihan klinikal

747 pegawai perubatan baharu mula bertugas

Oleh RIDZAUDDIN ROSLAN

PUTRAJAYA – Seramai 747 pegawai perubatan yang menamatkan latihan siswazah ditempatkan ke semua negeri bermula bulan ini bagi menampung kekurangan petugas sedia ada ketika ini.

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) dalam satu kenyataan berkata, penempatan itu bertujuan memberikan latihan supaya mereka mendapat pendedahan dan latihan klinikal yang mencukupi.

Katanya, ini penting agar mereka mampu memberi perkhidmatan berkualiti serta dapat mengamal dengan selamat.

"KKM amat memahami cabaran yang dihadapi oleh petugas kesihatan di seluruh negara dalam menghadapi peningkatan bebanan kerja.

"Beberapa langkah jangka

pendek dan jangka panjang akan dilaksanakan bagi mengatasi masalah ini," katanya di sini semalam.

Pada masa sama, KKM turut mengarahkan semua pengarah hospital untuk memastikan kebajikan semua petugas kesihatan terpelihara walaupun tahap pengisian pegawai perubatan siswazah (PPS) di hospital-hospital masih dalam proses penambahbaikan.

Selain itu, KKM turut memutuskan untuk membuka penempatan PPS baharu bagi lantikan siri ketiga ke beberapa hospital lain selain daripada hospital negeri.

Katanya, keputusan itu dibuat memandangkan peratus pengisian slot PPS telah bertambah baik yang mana tawaran penempatan dilaksanakan menerusi

sistem e-houseman pada 13 Mei lalu yang melibatkan 792 orang calon.

"Sebelum ini, KKM memutuskan pada awal tahun ini agar penempatan dibuka kepada hospital negeri sahaja disebabkan pelantikan PPS didapati semakin menurun dan pengisian slot PPS di hospital negeri berkurangan.

"Sehingga April lepas, KKM telah melaksanakan dua siri lantikan baharu PPS melibatkan seramai 701 orang pada siri lantikan pertama dan 803 orang pada siri lantikan kedua," katanya.

Menurut KKM, bagi siri lantikan seterusnya, penempatan PPS di hospital-hospital lain akan dipertimbangkan berdasarkan bilangan calon diterima daripada Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam serta faktor lain yang berkaitan.

Peningkatan kes Covid-19 di Johor masih terkawal

JOHOR BAHRU – Rakyat Johor tidak perlu bimbang dengan peningkatan kes Covid-19 yang dilaporkan berlaku di Singapura termasuk penularan varian baharu di republik berkenaan.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan dan Alam Sekitar Johor, Ling Tian Soon berkata, ini kerana kes Covid-19 yang berlaku di negeri ini masih terkawal.

"Di Johor, memang terdapat peningkatan kes Covid-19 sejak tiga minggu lalu, namun jumlah itu bukanlah satu peningkatan ketara.

"Walaupun berlaku peningkatan kes di Singapura, kita masih kekal dengan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang diamalkan sebelum ini, khususnya bagi golongan berisiko tinggi," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian selepas menghadiri sambutan Hari Wesak di Bandar Uda Utama, di sini semalam.

Menurut beliau, Johor merekodkan sebanyak 95 kes Covid-19 pada minggu epidemiologi ke-18 sebelum meningkat kepada 138 kes pada minggu epidemiologi ke-19.

Tambah Tian Soon, pihaknya akan berbincang dengan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sekiranya ada keperluan mengetatkan sebarang SOP berhubung perkara tersebut.

"Kita akan bincang dengan KKM sekiranya ada keperluan dikeluarkan SOP baharu. Tetapi pada waktu ini SOP sedia ada masih terpakai.

"Sementara itu, Johor juga tidak berdepan masalah kekurangan bekalan alat saringan Covid-19," ujarnya.

Terdahulu, Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, KKM sedang memantau trajektori gelombang peningkatan dua kali ganda kes Covid-19 yang dilaporkan di Singapura baru-baru ini.



TIAN SOON (kanan) hadir di upacara sambutan Hari Wesak di Bandar Uda Utama, Johor Bahru semalam.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

747 doktor pelatih ke hospital negeri, daerah

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PUTRAJAYA: Sebanyak 747 pegawai perubatan yang menamatkan latihan siswazah ditempatkan di fasiliti kesihatan seluruh negara bermula bulan ini bagi mengatasi kekurangan pegawai perubatan sedia ada.

Penempatan itu juga bertujuan memberi latihan supaya mereka mendapat pendedahan dan latihan klinikal mencukupi.

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) memaklumkan, langkah itu penting supaya mereka mampu memberi perkhidmatan berkualiti dan dapat mengamalkannya dengan selamat.

"KKM memahami cabaran dihadapi petugas kesihatan di seluruh negara dalam menghadapi peningkatan bebanan kerja.

"Beberapa langkah jangka pendek dan panjang akan dilaksanakan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

KKM turut mengarahkan Pengarah Hospital memastikan kebajikan semua petugas kesihatan terpelihara walaupun tahap pengisian pegawai perubatan siswazah (PPS) di hospital-hospital masih dalam proses penambahbaikan.

Selain itu, KKM memutuskan untuk membuka penempatan PPS baharu bagi lantikan siri ketiga di beberapa lagi hospital selain hospital negeri.

Katanya, keputusan itu dibuat memandangkan peratus pengisian slot PPS bertambah baik selepas tawaran penempatan dilaksanakan menerusi sistem *e-houseman* pada 13 Mei lalu melibatkan 792 calon.

Bersambung di muka 3

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

747 doktor pelatih ke hospital negeri, daerah

dari muka 1

"Sebelum ini, KKM memutuskan penempatan dibuka kepada hospital negeri sahaja disebabkan pelantikan PPS semakin menurun dan pengisian slot PPS di hospital negeri juga berkurangan.

"Sehingga April lalu, KKM melaksanakan dua siri lantikan baharu PPS melibatkan seramai 701 orang pada siri lantikan pertama dan 803 orang pada siri lantikan kedua," katanya.

Bagi lantikan seterusnya, kata KKM, penempatan PPS di hospital-hospital lain akan dipertimbang dari semasa ke semasa berdasarkan bilangan calon yang diterima daripada Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam serta faktor-faktor lain yang berkaitan.

Isu kekurangan petugas kesihatan di fasiliti kesihatan kerajaan sudah lama diperkatakan pelbagai pihak sehingga memberi ancaman kepada sektor kesihatan negara.

Malah, baru-baru ini Kongres Kesatuan Pekerja-Pekerja

Di Dalam Perkhidmatan Awam (CEUPACS), menggesa kerajaan mengambil serius luahan petugas kesihatan dan melaksanakan siasatan menyeluruh mengenai isu kekurangan kalfitangan yang sedang berlaku di hospital-hospital kerajaan ketika ini.

Isa susulan kejadian tular memaparkan gambar papan putif di sebuah fasiliti kesihatan yang memohon maaf dan memaklumkan mengenai kekurangan doktor.

Malah, siaran muka depan *Utusan Malaysia* semalam melaporkan, sebanyak 1,118 doktor kontrak daripada 5,489 yang ditawarkan sebagai pegawai perubatan tetap menolak tawaran tersebut, tidak melaporkan diri dan meletak jawatan sepanjang tahun lalu.

Jumlah itu merangkumi 529 pegawai yang menolak lantikan secara tetap dengan 559 lagi tidak melaporkan diri di fasiliti perubatan ditetapkan manakala 30 doktor kontrak meletak jawatan.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 31
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Johor pantau kes Covid-19 meningkat di Singapura

JOHOR BAHRU: Rakyat negeri ini tidak perlu bimbang dengan peningkatan kes Covid-19 yang dilaporkan berlaku di Singapura walaupun terdapat penularan varian baharu di republik berkenaan.

Walaupun mengakui berlaku peningkatan kes Covid-19 di Johor, namun Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan dan Alam Sekitar negeri, Ling Tian Soon menyifatkannya masih terkawal.

"Di Johor, memang terdapat peningkatan kes Covid-19 sejak tiga minggu lalu, namun jumlah itu bukanlah satu peningkatan yang ketara.

"Jadi, walaupun berlaku peningkatan kes di Singapura, kita masih kekal dengan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang diamalkan sebelum ini, khususnya bagi golongan berisiko tinggi," katanya selepas menghadiri Sambutan Hari Wesak di Bandar Uda Utama, di sini semalam.

Tian Soon berkata, negeri ini merekodkan sebanyak 95 kes Covid-19 pada minggu epid ke-18 sebelum meningkat menjadi 138 kes pada minggu epid ke-19 dan kemudian 154 kes pada minggu epidemik ke-20.

Pihaknya akan berbin-cang dengan Kementerian Kesihatan sekiranya ada keperluan mengetatkan SOP susulan perkara tersebut.

"Pada waktu ini SOP sedia ada masih terpakai. Johor juga tidak berdepan masalah kekurangan bekalan alat saringan Covid-19," katanya.

Terdahulu, Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, kementerian-nya sedang memantau trajektori gelombang peningkatan dua kali ganda kes Covid-19 yang dilaporkan di Singapura, baru-baru ini.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 14
RUANGAN : LETTERS

INFORMED CHOICES

Helping people beat smoking, obesity

THE Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2023 revealed a striking trend: despite the availability of cessation aid, the smoking habits of adult smokers have remained stubbornly stagnant.

The data indicate that personal choices matter. If an individual does not want to quit smoking, no external intervention will lead to lasting change.

Let's draw a parallel with the obesity epidemic. Governments worldwide emphasise the perils of excessive sugar consumption and advocate for healthier lifestyles.

In our case, the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 shows a nearly 10 per cent increase in the prevalence of excess weight and obesity between 2011 and last year.

Worryingly, the World Obesity Foundation predicts that more than two out of every three children in Malaysia will be overweight by 2035.

These data highlight a common thread: it is all about personal choices. For someone to change, willpower and the desire to change play

a crucial role.

If people do not want to reduce sugar intake, no amount of external pressure will alter their behaviour.

Thus, if people want to quit smoking, they will. Similarly, those committed to a healthy life will reduce sugar intake and engage in physical activity, as advised by health experts.

In other words, no amount of nagging and pestering can sway these intrinsic choices.

Given that personal choice matters, education holds the key to helping individuals make informed decisions.

By providing diverse perspectives and fostering critical thinking, we empower people to make the right choices and decisions for themselves.

For example, addressing the harmful effects of excessive sugar consumption isn't enough. We should also educate consumers about alternatives to white sugar, such as stevia or honey.

Perhaps, rewarding consumers or imposing lower taxes on consumers,

opting for alternatives like stevia and honey, or even adjusting sugar levels (full sugar, half sugar or slight sugar) can be considered.

Apply the same approach too when it comes to smoking. Drastically addressing the harmful effects of cigarette smoking is insufficient.

Generally speaking, I think we do recognise the fact that some smokers do not wish to quit. So, it is essential to explore alternative options.

While e-cigarettes have become increasingly popular, with recent GATS data showing the prevalence of e-cigarette use among people aged 15 to 24 surging from 1.1 per cent in 2011 to 8.6 per cent in 2023, the risks of e-cigarettes are not widely understood.

Therefore, there should be different approaches in terms of educating the public. Providing accurate information can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their tobacco use and sugar intake.

VANESSA MAY
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AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NATION

It's all over for some contract docs

After eight years, many are out in the cold with no jobs and forced to look for options

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
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PETALING JAYA: Dr Amy (not her real name) graduated with a medical degree in 2016 and has served with the Health Ministry as a contract doctor since 2017.

Seven years later, now aged 32, things look bleak for her – she is thinking of joining a private clinic as a general practitioner or leaving the medical field altogether to become a tuition teacher or look for a nine-to-five clerical job.

Dr Amy is one of many contract doctors who were not offered permanent positions by the Health Ministry even after serving for seven years. It has been a huge comedown for her.

"I studied medicine with very big dreams. I wanted nothing more than to continue to serve the ministry, but I think this is the end of the road. I will have to accept it with a heavy heart," said

Dr Amy, who served at a hospital in the Klang Valley.

She is from one of the earliest cohorts after the contract system was introduced in 2016 and has reached the maximum contract extension of seven years, who is now considering other options.

"It will be a challenge to switch fields but I am considering these options," she said.

Some other doctors who belonged to the first three cohorts have also taken to social media to announce their departure from the Health Ministry following the end of the seven-year contract.

However, it is not known how many doctors from the December 2016, February 2017 and May 2017 cohorts had not been offered permanent positions.

As of Dec 31, 2023, there were 14,511 contract doctors comprising 6,478 house officers and 8,033 medical officers. It is estimated that between 2016 and now, there are over 30,000 con-

tract officers in the civil service.

Between 2019 and 2023, the ministry had approved 9,822 permanent placements for medical officers. Between 2024 and 2025, some 6,000 permanent positions will be offered.

The contract system was introduced in 2016 to address the glut in medical graduates. Contracts were offered to medical officers for three years with extensions of up to four years, making it a total of seven years.

Eight years after the implementation of the system, medical groups still have little idea about the success of the contract system.

Hartal Doktor Kontrak spokesperson Dr Muhammad Yassin said the Health Ministry has never released data on how many doctors whose contracts have expired were not offered permanent positions.

He said that although the contract system was implemented in good faith to solve the issue of the

long wait for postings for medical graduates, it ended up being a failed system due to poor planning and lack of measures for improvement.

"Now, we are paying the price as many contract doctors have left the service and those remaining have to face an enormous burden and workload. This adds to work stress, which leads to many leaving the service. It's a vicious cycle," he said.

"There is a serious problem and we have to admit the contract system is full of flaws. It is time to revert to the permanent positions for all system and find a mechanism to improve working conditions to keep doctors in service."

"We also need a plan to attract more youngsters to join medical schools. There are fewer medical graduates now."

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz also felt the contract system cannot be called a success.

"It failed to provide job security and career certainty. Also, for a doctor to specialise, they need to remain in the system for a longer period of time," she said.

"The MMA had proposed a longer contract of up to 10 years as this would provide the doctors with some stability. This would be long enough for them to pursue specialisation through the system."

"But remuneration and perks also need to be looked into. It should at least match their permanent counterparts."

Independent healthcare advocate and former contract doctor Dr Sean Thum said that at a time when hospitals across the country are short of doctors, there must be some flexibility in the government's employment measures.

"We now have doctors with seven years of experience being let go because their tenure is up. We must find ways to retain their service," he said.

M'sians face higher risk of NCDs, say experts

By TARRENCE TAN and
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PETALING JAYA: Unhealthy diets, lifestyle choices and low health literacy have put Malaysians at higher risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), say experts.

"This makes us quite prone to NCDs and increases the risk of kidney, liver and heart diseases."

"Cancer is also on the rise and is expected to cause significant loss to quality of life, other than loss of life," said Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia health economics and public health specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh.

She said even younger people are contracting NCDs compared with two decades ago when these diseases were more common among older folk.

"Unless there is a change in lifestyle, diet and approach to health, these conditions will continue on an upward trend," she said in commenting on the findings of the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 released recently.

Citing other findings from the Statistics Department, Prof Sharifa Ezat said there was also a rise in deaths due to ischaemic heart disease, from 11.6% in 2016 to 17% in 2020.

"With insufficient resources and budgets, healthcare is moving more towards privatisation and precision medicine."

"It will cost more now to access healthcare and many people will not be able to afford it," she said.

Commenting on rising cases of depression, University of Cyberjaya Assoc Prof Dr Anasuya Jegathevi Jegathesan said the statistics are not surprising.

She said a lack of a clean environment, excessive time spent on gadgets and the emphasis on exam scores over creative and physical activities, as well as family dynamics, could have contributed to depression.



Fun but risky move: Unhealthy diets and poor lifestyle choices have put Malaysians at higher risk of NCDs.
— Filepic

"The world economy, wars and increase of violence in the world – all of these lead to depression and people having a very poor outlook for the future," said the dean of the university's Psychology and Social Sciences Faculty.

Dr Anasuya added that the focus should be on prevention, rebuilding families and learning how to manage mental health rather than treating it as a taboo subject, with greater emphasis on fun and practical life skills.

Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh said the lack of access and high cost of healthcare means people would be less likely to seek early detection and treatment.

"The government needs to provide access, especially to early screening. Don't make people line up for three hours" said Dr Kuljit, adding that Malaysians who can

afford health screenings should get themselves checked regularly.

"Invest a small amount of money (on health screenings) and you will at least safeguard yourself from a huge catastrophe."

Dr Kuljit said healthcare is expensive as the government spends billions annually on the upkeep of public hospitals.

He added that the culture of overindulgence and lack of exercise has led to unhealthy trends, and it is crucial to educate people about the importance of health.

"People who prepare food should also be educated to ensure there isn't too much oil or sugar in food, among others," said Dr Kuljit.

Federation of Private Medical Practitioners' Associations Malaysia president Dr Shanmuganathan Ganeson said the NHMS findings are reflective of the community,

which is currently in survival mode when it comes to finances.

"Therefore, they have less priority for their own health despite knowing the fallout of non-intervention," he said.

He added that surgery and procedural treatments such as coronary stenting, angioplasty, cardiac bypass, oncological operations and treatment are costly.

"Many seniors above 56 who do not have insurance often shy away and are resigned to their fates, rather than burden their families," he said.

Dr Shanmuganathan also said the rise in private outpatient services is due to the rapid increase in private GP (general practitioner) clinics, while the decline in people seeking government outpatient services is due to factors such as long waiting times and parking issues.

Housemen to be placed at other hospitals

PETALING JAYA: The placement of medical graduates for housemanship has been expanded to beyond just state hospitals in a move by the Health Ministry to meet manpower needs.

"This offer of placement was implemented from May 13 involving 792 candidates," said the ministry.

"We understand the challenges faced by health practitioners nationwide in dealing with the increase in their workload. A number of short-term and long-term solutions will be implemented to overcome this problem," it said in a statement yesterday.

The Star reported early this month that the number of housemen at the ministry had declined by 50% since 2019, following a drop in medical graduates.

There were 6,134 housemen in 2019 but this went down to 3,271 last year.

Yesterday, the ministry said earlier this year, it was decided that the placement of housemen was opened to state hospitals only due to a decrease in such vacancies.

"As of April, the Health Ministry has implemented two series of placements involving 701 people in the first intake and 803 in the second intake."

"This decision was made in view of the fact that the percentage of filling up housemen vacancies has improved."

As for the placement of housemen in other hospitals, the ministry said that this would be considered from time to time, depending on the number of candidates received from the Public Services Department and other factors.

It added that 747 medical officers who had graduated in May had been placed in all states to ease the shortage.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NATION

No change to Covid-19 SOP in M'sia

However, cross-border travellers advised to mask up due to recent wave in S'pore

By YEE XIANG YUN
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JOHOR BARU: Cross-border travel for Malaysians working in Singapore will not be affected by the recent wave of Covid-19 infections in the island republic for now, says Johor health and environment committee chairman Ling Tian Soon.

However, he advised those with comorbidities or from high-risks groups to mask up when heading out.

"Although a fresh Covid-19 wave has hit Singapore, we are keeping to the same standard operating procedure (SOP) for now.

"I advise the public, especially senior citizens, children and those with pre-existing illnesses, to wear a face mask when going to crowded or public areas," he told reporters after attending a Wesak Day celebration at the Fo Guang Shan Hsingmasi temple here yesterday.

Ling said the situation in the state was still manageable, with 154 Covid-19 cases reported in epidemiological week 20



Beware of the new wave: An average of 350,000 travellers cross the border from Malaysia to Singapore daily, mostly for work. — Filepic

(May 12-18).

This was a slight increase from 138 cases recorded in the previous week and 95 in week 18.

Asked whether a new SOP would be introduced for cross-border travellers, especially with thousands of Malaysians com-

muting to and from the city-state for work daily, Ling said he would discuss the matter with the Health Ministry.

"If need be, the ministry will issue a new SOP. For now, the existing SOP remains for all, including cross-border travellers, to mask up if you are in the high-risk groups and continue maintaining good personal hygiene.

"Those experiencing symptoms such as flu and cough should seek medical attention immediately and wear a face mask to prevent infecting others," he said.

He added that Covid-19 test kits are readily available at pharmacies and retail outlets for residents who want to perform self-tests.

Last Saturday, Singapore's Health Ministry said the estimated number of Covid-19 cases in the week of May 5 to 11 had risen to 25,900 cases, compared with 13,700 cases in the previous week.

It also said the average daily Covid-19 hospitalisations had increased to about 250, from 181 the week before.

The ministry added that the combined proportion of subvariants KP.1 and KP.2 accounted for over two-thirds of Covid-19 cases in the republic then.

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

Acute shortage of psychiatrists to deal with one million cases

► Statistics doubled since 2019, with 50% patients exhibiting self-harming behaviour, suicidal tendencies

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: One million Malaysians over 15 years old are experiencing depression, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023, but there is a grossly inadequate number of psychiatrists to deal with the problem.

Raja Perempuan Zainab II Hospital psychiatry and mental health department head Dr Fariza Yahya said the figure has doubled from 2019, with about 50% of cases exhibiting self-harming behaviour and suicidal tendencies.

International Islamic University Malaysia psychiatrist Dr Rozanizam Zakaria said in January 2022, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that more than 264 million people of all ages globally were affected by depression.

He said the organisation suggests a minimum threshold of at least one psychiatrist per 100,000 population as a basic indicator of mental health service availability.

"Currently, Malaysia has about 500 psychiatrists resulting in a ratio of approximately 0.52 psychiatrists per 100,000 patients, which falls very short of what WHO recommends."

Fariza said the hospital's Psychiatric Specialist Clinic receives 50 new mental health cases for treatment each month, with 25 of them involving patients suffering from depression.

"The prevalence of depression is about 5% worldwide. Cases are more prevalent in major cities where there are more stressors, especially for those with financial issues, low income and poor social support."

"The most affected age group are those between 20 and 40. Even though we cannot prevent depression we can stop it from worsening by treating it as soon as possible."

Fariza said those who seek psychiatric treatment usually have moderate to severe symptoms that have deteriorated their social functions and caused them to have suicidal thoughts, or exhibit such behaviour.

She said it is crucial to raise awareness on the severity and dangers of mental illness, as it is among the leading causes of death due to suicide.

"The stigma of having mental illness causes people to avoid seeking treatment. Malays, in

particular, attribute the illness to supernatural causes or being possessed by spirits."

She said some patients sought treatment from traditional medicine practitioners in villages, while others attempted self-treatment with illegal drugs such as *pil kuda* (methamphetamine).

Fariza said methamphetamine is a stimulant that may make patients feel happy for the moment, but it does not treat depression as they will return to their original state once the euphoric effect subsides.

"Males with mental illness also usually suffer from substance abuse or addiction to narcotics."

"More serious mental illness in younger age groups are usually triggered by depression, unstable family environments, traumatic events, history of abuse, relationship problems and academic pressures."

Fariza said common factors leading to depression among middle-aged and elderly individuals are their chronic or terminal illnesses which are further compounded by marital or financial problems.

"Work-related stress is also a significant factor within the age group, while housewives often face depression due to abusive husbands or those who are drug addicts."

Rozanizam said apart from psychiatrists, the country desperately needs a multidisciplinary team of clinical psychologists, counsellors, occupational therapists and mental health nurses.

He said such a team is critical for managing and treating mental health conditions.

However, the government also needs to implement supportive policies and provide training for various stakeholders to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

Rozanizam said there must be moves to promote acceptance and inclusion for all individuals facing mental health challenges, and stressed the importance of enhancing accessibility to mental health services in disadvantaged and rural areas.

He said this could be achieved through increased financial support and additional resources, with a focus on improving community mental health services and preventive programmes.

"We should encourage greater involvement of non-governmental organisations to strengthen mental health support and include resilience-building skills into the education curriculum beginning at the primary school level."



Rozanizam said the government needs to implement supportive policies and provide training for various stakeholders to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN